

Additional Trauma Fund Provisions

The following provisions are uncodified sections of Chapter 331, 1997 (2SSB 5127), an act relating to funding trauma care services. Other codified sections of this act that relate to the statewide trauma care system are located at RCW 70.168.040 and 70.168.135.

Section 8. The legislature finds as follows:

Emergency medical services and trauma care are provided to all residents of the state regardless of a person's ability to pay. Historically, hospitals and health care providers have been able to recover some of their financial losses incurred in caring for an uninsured or underinsured person by charging persons able to pay more. In recent years, the health care industry has undergone substantial changes. With the advent of managed health care programs and the adoption of new cost control measures, some hospitals and health care providers assert that it is difficult to shift costs for uninsured and underinsured patients onto insured patients.

In 1990 the legislature established a coordinated trauma care system. Part of the 1990 legislation included funding for a study to determine the extent to which trauma care is uncompensated and under-compensated. This study focused exclusively on trauma care. The legislature finds that, as a prerequisite to determining the amount of state aid that may be necessary to assist health care providers and facilities, it is necessary to examine trauma care losses within the context of a health care provider or facility's total financial operations.

Section 10. The department of health, in cooperation with the department of social and health services, shall monitor the adequacy of the funding mechanisms created in this act. The department of health shall report to the legislature by December 1998 the extent to which these funds covered the cost of uncompensated care in designated trauma care services in the state.